

Item #24: Peregrine Falcon Nesting Territories and Annual Productivity

Evaluation Objectives: To evaluate the effect of land management practices on the population and habitat of peregrine falcons on the forest.

Methods: Monitoring of peregrine falcon populations and habitat is accomplished in connection with site-specific project analysis and survey of known or suspected nesting cliffs (eyries). In addition, monitoring has occurred statewide by the Montana Peregrine Institute.

Evaluation: There is one documented peregrine eyrie on the Flathead National Forest (FNF) and possibly another that is being monitored by a private raptor group. A pair of peregrines was seen nesting at one location in 1993, but no young were fledged until the third year (1995). One to two young were fledged each year in 1995, 1996, and 1997. Since the early 2000s, this eyrie has been one of more productive nest sites in the state. Known active eyries in Montana have jumped from 14 in 1994-95 to a high of 84 in 2009 (Table 24-2). Seventy-six sites were checked in 2010 with 7 known reproductive failures with 95 young fledged. Other than the additional possible eyrie monitored by the private raptor group, Forest Service site specific project surveys or landbird monitoring have not identified any additional eyries on the forest.

Table 24-1. Peregrine Eyrie Occupancy and Fledging Success by Year.

Year	Occupancy	Fledglings
1993	Yes	0
1994	Yes	0
1995	Yes	+1 (at least 1 observed)
1996	Yes	2
1997	Yes	+2 (at least 2 observed)
1998	Yes	+3 (at least 3 observed)
1999	Yes	+1 (at least 1 observed)
2000	Yes	4
2001	Yes	+2 (at least 2 observed)
2002	Yes	3
2003	Yes	4
2004	Yes	3
2005	Yes	3
2006	Yes	4
2007	Yes	3 viewed with webcam
2008	Yes	Unk unable to get count
2009	Yes	2
2010	Yes	2

Table 24-2. Statewide Peregrine Falcon Nest Success

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Total active	28	29	37	36	40	51	52	67	68	74	84	72
Total active with productivity count	24	28	37	35	40	51	49	66	68	67	79	69
Young fledged	43	59	66	77	80	101	94	147	108	125	176	95
Young /active territory	1.8	2.1	1.8	2.2	2	2	1.9	2.2	1.6	1.9	2.2	1.4

The one documented eyrie on the FNF has been in continuous use for approximately 18 years and successful every year since 1995. One of the original birds had a leg band, and probably was the result of reintroduction/hacking efforts in other areas of Montana. The banning of the pesticide DDT in the 1970s is likely the primary factor contributing to the recovery of this species. Captive breeding programs, reintroductions into the wild and nest site protection also assisted in recovery. Peregrine falcons were delisted from the federal endangered species list in 1999. The peregrine falcon remains a Forest Service sensitive species.

The productivity at known active peregrine falcon eyries in Montana is monitored annually in cooperation with The Montana Peregrine Institute. Annual occupancy and productivity information can be obtained at <http://www.montanaperegrine.org/>.

Recommended Action: Continue cooperative partnership with The Montana Peregrine Institute to monitor and survey annually as resources allow. Continue to conduct analysis to review programs and activities to determine potential effects. Restrict access and recreational activities associated with the known eyrie.